

Governor Reeves provides update on closure of Parchman's Unit 29

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Governor Tate Reeves has made an announcement regarding the ongoing closure of Parchman's most notorious unit.

As the process of closing Unit 29 at Parchman continues, Governor Tate Reeves announced that an agreement has been reached that will allow the inmates remaining in the unit to be transferred to the nearby Tallahatchie County Correctional Facility.

The intent to close Unit 29 was originally announced during Governor Reeves' State of the State Address in January, and since then, certain inmates have already been transferred from the unit through reclassification and exchanges for lower-security inmates.

According to the Governor, 375 inmates were transferred to Tallahatchie during the initial surge of violence, and the remaining prisoners will be transported in small groups in the coming weeks.

The first group of inmates was transferred this morning. During the transfer, law enforcement seized 7 shanks, 10 cellphones and a bag of marijuana.

As inmates are transferred out of the unit, which was at the center of questions regarding living conditions in Mississippi prisons, officials are still working toward a long-term solution to house the state's most dangerous inmates. Governor Reeves said that they are taking a "close look" at Walnut Grove, a facility that closed in 2016, as they determine how to move forward.

"We need a Department of Corrections that corrects criminal behavior. We need a department that prevents future violence or crimes. We don't want anyone who leaves this system to return. We want them to go on to lead lives of purpose, meaning, and dignity," said Governor Reeves, "Justice must be our focus—for all Mississippians. We have never forgotten that during our work to restore order, and it will be an ongoing effort throughout our time in office."

In a news release, the Governor's office provided a breakdown of the agreement.

'The Reeves administration renegotiated the price for housing, achieving a nearly 5% reduction in the cost per prisoner. The inmates will now be housed at a rate of \$62.50/day compared to the previous \$65/day rate. Only death row—which is required by law to remain on the premises—and a support services building which helps maintain the rest of the prison will remain in operation.'

The search for a permanent commissioner for the Department Corrections continues while Tommy Taylor serves as the interim Commissioner.